

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

### **1-15. (Cancelled)**

**16. (New)** A hand-held electrostatic-painting spray gun comprising:

an atomizer provided at a forward end of the spray gun;

an external charging electrode disposed at an outer portion of the spray gun so as to project ahead of the atomizer, the external charging electrode being separated from a passage through which paint is to be supplied to the atomizer, with an electric insulation of the external charging electrode being maintained;

an electroconductive grip provided behind the atomizer; and

an electrode receptacle provided at an outer portion of a barrel the spray gun,

wherein an output terminal connected to a high voltage generator via a first high-resistance resistor maintaining electrical insulation from the passage through which paint is to be supplied, is connected to an electrical connecting portion provided at a bottom of the electrode receptacle, the external electrode being exposed at a forward end thereof and having a plug-in portion formed at a rear end thereof, the plug-in portion having a connecting terminal, the electrode and the connecting terminal being connected by a conductor,

wherein the connecting terminal and the electrical connecting portion are connectable by plugging the plug-in portion into the electrode receptacle, the external electrode as a whole being formed of an insulative material,

wherein the external electrode includes an engagement piece and the electrode receptacle includes a retention recess, the external electrode being freely connectable to and disconnectable from the electrode receptacle, wherein the external electrode is connectable to the electrode receptacle by plugging the plug-in portion into the electrode receptacle such that the engagement piece engages the retention recess.

**17. (New)** The spray gun according to claim 16, wherein a second high-resistance resistor is provided at the forward end of the external electrode.

**18. (New)** The spray gun according to claim 16, wherein:

a distance between the connecting terminal connected with the output terminal of the high voltage generator and an inlet end of the electrode receptacle is sufficiently long to prevent creepage discharging.

**19. (New)** The spray gun according to claim 16, wherein at least a portion of the electrode body comprises a bendable portion formed of a flexible or resilient material.

**20. (New)** The spray gun according to claim 16, wherein at least a portion of the electrode body is formed of a material having a lower strength than that of the electrode receptacle.

**21. (New)** An electrostatic-painting spray gun comprising:

an atomizer provided at a forward end of the spray gun;

an external charging electrode disposed at an outer portion of the spray gun so as to project ahead of the atomizer, the external charging electrode being separated from a passage through which paint is to be supplied to the atomizer, with an electric insulation of the external charging electrode being maintained; and

an electrode receptacle provided at an outer portion of the spray gun, an output terminal of a high voltage generator being connected to the electrode receptacle, wherein the external electrode is freely attachable to and removable from the electrode receptacle, the electrode receptacle having a plurality of grooves formed along an outer surface of the electrode receptacle so as to define a plurality of projections,

wherein the external electrode includes an electrode body formed from an insulative material, the electrode body having a charging electrode provided so as to be exposed at a forward end thereof and a plug-in portion formed at a rear end thereof, the plug-in portion having a connecting terminal arranged to electrically connect to the electrode receptacle so as to conduct electricity from the electrode receptacle to the charging electrode, the plug-in portion having a plurality of grooves formed along an outer surface of the plug-in portion so as to define a

plurality of projections, the plug-in portion being attachable to the electrode receptacle by inserting the projections of the plug-in portion into respective grooves of the electrode receptacle and by inserting the projections of the electrode receptacle into respective grooves of the plug-in portion, and

wherein a corrugated boundary surface formed by outer surfaces of the grooves and projections of the electrode receptacle and the plug-in portion is defined between an exposed end of the outer surface of the plug-in portion and an electrical connection formed between the connecting terminal and the electrode receptacle so as to provide a long creepage distance.

**22. (New)** The spray gun according to claim 21, wherein at least a portion of the electrode body comprises a bendable portion formed of a flexible or resilient material.

**23. (New)** The spray gun according to claim 21, wherein at least a portion of the electrode body is formed of a material having a lower strength than that of the electrode receptacle.